

Kitan Magazine



Volume Four

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Kitan Magazine: Volume Four

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Cover picture: *Oiran* in a harimise in Edo.

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Prologue: Kitan Magazine

Le Minotaur Press of Vancouver is pleased to publish this fourth volume of ***Kitan*** Magazine which serves to feature the work of remarkable writers, poets & artists.

Kitan means tale in Japanese. This Magazine is about the excitement, adventure, romance, Love and Eros of the Orient.

Kitan Magazine welcomes submissions on a biannual basis.

Please feel free to submit your submissions to

penny_plenty321@yahoo.com

There is no fee to submit. There is no writer's fee provided by the journal for those who submit. The publishing rights remain with the writer.

Kitan Prose:

My Very Special Birthday Gift by Reiko

[Tokyo] For my last birthday, my sister's friend Aki organized a very special Birthday Gift for me. My sister Keiko, her two friends Yuki and Aki, and I were sharing an apartment in Vancouver. For two years I was going to a college in Vancouver to improve my spoken and written English. It was for my 19th birthday.

I am now back home in Japan. Now that I am home, my parents want me to go to University full time next term but I have told them I would rather find a part time job and maybe go part time, or work for a few years and then go to University fulltime ... but not in Japan. I enjoyed the freedom I felt in Canada. Japan is too ordered and a structured society. I need my freedom! I have my sights on spending a few years in Europe. Maybe Italy, Spain or France? Or maybe Quebec in Canada? The United States is too dangerous for a single Japanese girl.

My parents are also pushing me to go out and find a husband. They talk about getting old and wanting grandchildren. I asked my mother why they don't talk about this with Keiko who is two years older than I am ... but they tell me they have and she has said she is really not in a hurry to get married and to have children.

My sister I have talked about this and she says to me that I have "*the right idea! ... enjoy life to its fullest.*" She hasn't told me whether she wants to get married. What she did tell me was how she watched me have fun in high

school. But ... this left me confused, because when I had too much fun she would scold me to stop! I would go out more often than she did in high school and I had a reputation, of sorts. Keiko had a steady boyfriend but he didn't stay with her because she didn't let him ... you know ... with her. This frustrated him greatly.

Just before Keiko left for Vancouver she asked him to “*wait for her*” but he instead decided they should split up. Perhaps I should tell you we are a Catholic family and believe that you should “*wait until you are married.*”

Being a hot head the following weekend he went to a Love Hotel with a stranger and well ... everyone knows he now has a malady ... that will not go away. Keiko knows ... and refuses to talk with him.

When I was in high school I had many friends who were boys, but I never let them go past a certain point with me. Sure I let them fondle my breasts ... that felt good ... what is really wrong with that? But I am still a virgin ... I would tell them that and then would said I was “*waiting until I found the right man and married him.*”

That, of course, would make them even more passionate ... which was, in reflexion, perhaps expected. So I took to playing with them ... and they let me play with them! Boys are so proud of their *inkei* ... (you can look this word up in a Japanese language dictionary) ... or you can guess, and you will probably be right. They think the bigger the better! But all sizes and shapes I found interesting.

My sister caught on to what I was enjoying, and just before she left for Vancouver she joined me on a date with four boys. They turned out to be quite a handful {*wink*}.

Keiko took pictures of her the toys of her two boys. She sent these pictures to her ex after they broke up to tease him. She wanted to know what he was missing ... she had only once seen his *inkei* when they had gone to a public Onsen and he insisted they bath in the family section.

Keiko held a towel over herself ... he didn't. When he removed his towel, she excused herself to go pee ... and then quickly dressed and left him there. She took the train back by herself and didn't talk with him for a month.

In high school I enjoyed playing with two or three dozen boys and their toys. That was my reputation. And no I did not play the flute (I play the piano). One day I decided to photograph them, which was a real “*turn on*” for the boys. I started a photo diary of my enjoyment. Perhaps one day I should publish my diary?

In grade twelve I took a photography class. We were asked to present a major project. I decided to present my own photo interpretation of the infamous painting *L'Origine de Guerre*.

Here is the original painting:



L'Origine de Guerre came out in the 1980's. Here is one of my interpretations:



After I handed in my photographs to my teacher he rejected them as being too sexual and even said they were *pornographic*. I argued they were art and that

my photographs were less *pornographic* than some of the Manga the boys in the high school read. It was a double standard with the Manga portraying girls being speared by the boy's inkei and yet their inkeis were not to be shown I put a whole stack of the Manga that my girlfriends had gathered from their boyfriends.

My *L'Origine de Guerre* interpretations almost got me expelled from high school. It wasn't perhaps the fact they were pictures of boy's toys ... it was perhaps because the boys were from my high school. My photographs were never publicly shown at my high school.

A small, *surrealist* gallery in Tokyo heard about my *L'Origine de Guerre* scandal and offered to give me a showing. But the boys took offense to this ... so instead the gallery offered to show some of my other photographs.

These other photographs are just as interesting. When the girls in my class asked to see my *L'Origine de Guerre* series, they made a game of it to guess which *inkei* belong to which boy.

Several of the girls who recognized their boyfriend asked me to photograph them for the Gallery showing. It forms my *Mystery* series.

Here is one of the *Mystery* photographs I did:



The *Mystery* is ... of course ... who does it belong to? It belongs to the girlfriend of the boy whose *toy* is the one I have shown. She recognized him immediately. She asked me how many times I had “*played with his toy ...*” Only once ... I swear!

For some reason the *Mystery* series was shown in the Tokyo Gallery but not my *L'Origine de Guerre* series. I decided to show *Mystery* under a pseudonym. The Japanese media is crazy and there are some television shows that play on this concept who does it belong to? ... but when it comes to *inkei* ... no ... never in a thousand years! By the way, the Gallery is owned and run by a rather wild European women.

Both my *L'Origine de Guerre* and *Mystery* photographs have now been published outside of Japan, and is available online for anyone in Japan to see!

Let me tell you about some of the things I learned about boys and their toys. It is so easy to get them excited! I found that out when I thirteen when a classmate asked me to “*play with him.*” In half a minute he went from being floppy to be fully aroused. He was small mind you even when fully aroused ... and when he got excited ... nothing really seemed to happen! He said he could feel something happening and asked I play with his two *Kogans*. I tickled his *In no* and rolled his *Kogans* in my hand like you might play with a pair of dice. The effect on him was remarkable. After a few minutes he did orgasm, and some clear liquid did pop out.

This was not just the first time I played with a boy it was also the first time I saw a boy pop. I could not stop giggling! I got me very aroused and I nearly yield to his pleas but the goo on my fingers convinced me to stop. I did not want to get pregnant,

Most girls don’t realize that it is not only a boy’s *inkei* that is sensitive when they are aroused, but it is their *In no*, and their two *Kogans*. Once I found this out I took to letting the boys play with their *inkei* while I tickle their *In no* and played with their *Kogans*.

Now when a boy asked me to play with him I would tell them that I was a virgin and if we played it be me teasing them and that’s all and it would be and it would “*only be this once*” ... The moment I would say I was a virgin they would become insistent. Before I agreed to play with them they would have to promise they would only ask me to do this once, and I would decide what we would do and then they would leave me alone.

Most agreed to my terms, but some followed me around afterwards like they were a lost puppy and I was their *bitchsan* ... When I told them that was as far as I would go with them, they would sooner or later turn their attention elsewhere. Sometimes when they wouldn't I would ask around with my girlfriends and find them a match then hinted to the boy who might be looking for a boyfriend.

Only once did I decide to play with a boy more than once. We were both sixteen. I had knew him since we were in grade school. I knew intuitively that he was different from other boys. In fact he was. His *In no* was empty. He had no *Kogans*. Well, in fact he did but they were inside him. They had never dropped where they should go, into his *In no*.

The first time I played with him we went at it for nearly an hour but he hardly reacted. He started to cry. He had never let a girl see him like this. Out of pity I said we would try again.

A few weeks later we played a second time. The second time he was more aroused but still no pop. He was ready to give up but I said no. For the first time I took an *inkei* in my hand and tried to pump it as I had seen other boys do it. For a few minutes he got more aroused but then said I should stop. He said I was squeezing too tightly and that it was rather uncomfortable. He got depressed ... so I said let's try one last time. .

A few weeks later we played a third time. Before I had never agreed to take my clothes off when playing with boys (I had always remained fully clothed). But this time I agreed to take my blue and white school blouse and bra off, but I kept my school skirt and my panties on. It felt very weird being half naked for him but we had grown up together ... We got him to lay on the floor and put his legs onto a chair. I got in between his legs so that he could see me as he masturbated himself (*masturbate* is a new word in my English vocabulary – I giggle when I pronounce it). With him like that it was a weird angle that left nothing to the imagination.

While he masturbated, I tickled his *In no* ... Instead of pumping with his hand he held his hand in a ring only teasing the tip of his *inkei*. This time after a few minutes something did happen. He popped. It was a small pop of maybe a few drops, but it was his first time having an orgasm. He was so overcome with joy, that he pleaded with me to be his girlfriend ... but once again I said no ... and left it at that.

Next Valentine's Day he sent me a half-dozen red roses and a thank you card with a picture of him and his new girlfriend – a girl we had both gone to elementary school together. Both were smiling warmly. They were obviously very happy together. In the picture I noticed he held his girlfriend's hand with his left hand and his right hand which was out of sight of his girlfriend was in the shape of a ring.

Since I came to Canada two years ago I have been so busy at school that I have not had a chance to meet anyone and so I have not played with any boy

and their toys ... until recently. The birthday party Aki arranged for me this year was amazing!

My birthday party was at the studio of an artist she had met a year after she arrived in Vancouver. It was also to be an art party. My birthday party started mid-afternoon and went on until well after midnight. They had something special planned for dinner and kept that a secret.

Since I was the birthday girl they asked me, with a communal giggle, what games I wanted to play ... the first thing that came to mind was *spin the bottle*!

I remembered playing *spin the bottle* at a birthday party when I was ten and so we played an adult version of *spin the bottle*. Being four girls with one boy we ganged up on him and in the space of fifteen minutes he was down to his last piece of clothing ... but I was told by Aki he had to keep his underwear on ... “*at least for now.*”

From this point onwards, every time the bottle spun to him he was allowed to take a piece of clothing off the rest of us. The bottle kept on stopping at him and ... you guessed it being the birthday girl he kept on taking my things off until I was sitting there just in my panties, arms crossed across my breasts.

In about thirty minutes we were all just in our last piece of clothing ... our panties! Aki had brought our robes in a bag and so she passed them out and we put them on. It was at this moment that I figured out the party had been

planned this way. It was all about having fun! Only Aki's male remained unrobed and nearly naked.

He changed into what he called a "*loin cloth*" which sort of hid away his *inkei*, but kept his backside bare. The "*loin cloth*" was made from thin fabric. We could see the size and shape of him. Instinctively I knew "*loin cloth*" would eventually come off and so I waited patiently.

We took turns choosing a game. I was Yuki's turn to decide.

Yuki is the oldest of us four girls and has the most life experiences. The next game we played was an adult version of *truth or dare*. Using a deck of cards we all drew a card and the person with the lowest card was challenged by the person who had the highest card ... *truth or dare* ...

The tales that were shared by us would make a whole story ... which I will leave for now. I, of course, had to recount some of my boy toy adventures. The stories my sister shared with us told me things about her that I did not know. Perhaps she regrets telling them, I don't know. I wonder if her other friends knew them before me ...

The stories that Aki's male friend told us was from the many funny things that has happened to him as an artist's model, or in the life drawing studio. I could not stop giggling, the stories were so funny! He said the studio had three rules:

The first is what goes on in the studio is all about art, second everyone has to be happy in the studio and third, what goes on in the studio stays in the studio.

We played *truth or dare* for over an hour. It was like be in grade school again.

Next to choose a game was my sister. She chose *origami*, the art of Japanese paper folding, something Keiko was an expert at. The four of us knew how to do *origami* and so we took turns teaching Aki's friend how to fold paper into the shape of a box, a cat's head, a butterfly and other shapes. It was such a beautiful thing for us to do. I had not done origami since I was a little girl. I had forgotten how much fun it was!

It was now dinner time and I was taken into the other room for a few minutes as my dinner surprise was prepared. Aki was in charge of my dinner surprise. After about five minutes of teasing I was allowed back into the other room.

What an amazing sight greeted me!

Aki had organized *nyotaimori* for our dinner. There was Aki's friend naked on the floor, lying on a blanket, with a brown and green imitation turtle shell over his maleness. He was blind folded and covered in sushi.

His *inkei* was covered by a dark piece of silk and poked out as the head of the turtle. I took pictures because you would probably not believe my story.



Usually *nyotaimori* ... *naked sushi* ... has a woman as the table for male guests. This evening there was a male as the table for the four of us women. There was also sake with our dinner – two large warm bottles. Everything was perfect.

Aki told me for dinner we should all just speak Japanese. Then she said we can take off our robes. What a sight! Four women, naked except for their panties, kneeling beside an all but naked man wearing a turtle shell over his maleness with sushi all over his body.

The urge came over me to look! I did not ask permission but started to pull on the silk fabric hiding him away, holding down on the shell as I did this. It was unwrapping my birthday gift. No one stopped me.

He let out a sigh as he flopped into view. I had not seen an *inkei* in many months. His was so pink and beautiful. Since Aki knew I enjoyed playing with boy's toys, she said I could tease the turtle ... but only me ... and only using the small pinky finger. So I did! He was so soft.



Part of our play was that we had to lift sushi off his body using only our lips. We could not use chopsticks, nor could we use our fingers. To lift a piece off his body meant we kissed his body every time we took up a piece of sushi. As we ate the sushi off his body we noticed he blushed more intensely and he got bigger and bigger.

To arouse him even further from time to time I stroked his *inkei* with my pinky finger. I started at the bottom and caressed him up to the tip, then I circled the tip slowly and lightly with my pinky, then went down the other side. At times I could see his heartbeat in the pulsing nods of the turtle's head.



The effect on him was remarkable. He grew even more in length and in width. I had never seen an *inkei* so aroused! I took out my cellphone to take some pictures. Again no one stopped me. “What a cute little turtle!” I said in Japanese and we all giggle. I think he even giggled, and so I wondered if he understood a bit of Japanese.

We slowly ate the sushi. From time to time we fed him some sushi, transferring the piece from our lips to his. We also poured some sake into his mouth. As we ate pieces off his body, Aki would place down more sushi. From time to time his *inkei* would start to shrink. It was then that I would caress him back to a full erection.

Once when I was doing this Yuki leaned over him and brought one of her nipples to his lips. We watched as he slowly realized what was being

presented to him and then kissed Yuki's nipple. We giggle ... then we all did the same. His *inkei* went back to being rigid.

All in all, the *nyotaimori* lasted an hour. What a beautiful experience!

When we had finished our sushi ... what next? My three sisters smiled at me. They wanted me to decide. I looked down at him and admired his beauty. He was perfect. It took me a few seconds before I knew what I wanted to do.

I could have removed the turtle shell and then play with him the same way I had played with other boys. But today was an extraordinary day. I decided it would be nice to do something different. So instead of lifting off the turtle shell I reached under the shell and started to tickle his *Kogans*. He started to squirm ... He let out a deep sigh but didn't ask me to stop ... so I continued to tease him. While this was going on we kept our words to a whisper.

My three sisters leaned over admiring him. They talked excitedly ... The fact his *inkei* was constricted by the little hole in the turtle shell meant he was growing huge. We had never seen a boy so big before!

As we whispered to each other he moved his head slowly side to side. Yuki pulled down on his bind fold so that he could not see anything.

He started to breathe deeply. His legs tensed, then his toes started to move about, then curl. This was the first time I played with a boy where the boy did

not stroke his *inkei*. With my pinky I started to caress him. Then Aki, Yuki and Keiko joined in caressing him. They all said how warm and soft he was.

As they did this I felt his *Kogans* start to move close to his body. Not much longer I thought ... until he will pop! For the four of us girls, he was so beautiful to watch.

He arched his back and his whole body tensed ... he clenched his fists. I whispered in English “not yet ...” He let out a sigh and his body relaxed a bit. We all slowed our caresses to tease him for as long as possible. We working making it an ordeal for him.

That was a drop of dew on the tip of his *inkei*. I blew on it. He shuddered. My three sisters started to blow all over his body. He let out an *argh* of frustration. His nipple had now become quite hard. Both Aki and Yuki began to caress his nipples with their pinky fingers. Keiko started to caress his *inkei* ... Yuki said in Japanese ...”*don’t let him pop!*”

He started to tense up in the way I had seen boys tense up before they reached orgasm. Yuki whispered “stop!” and so we did. It was too much for him. He started to move his hands wanting to grab his *inkei* but we held them down. He drew his legs together ... so we drew them apart.

Yuki leaned forward and whispered something into his ear and he relaxed his body ...

There was a pause of a half minute before Aki reached over and removed the turtle shell. Then Yuki took off his bind fold. We let his arms go. He looked at the four of us with an innocent face, then covered his *inkei* with his hand as if he was suddenly grasping his nakedness. Without saying a word he leaned forward and sat for a moment looking at our smiling faces, before standing up and marching defiantly to the bathroom.

In a few seconds we could hear he was taking a shower. Yuki put on her robe and went into the bathroom. She stayed with him for perhaps two minutes. We could hear them talking but could not make out the words. When she returned she said she wanted to make sure he didn't "*spend himself*" under the hot shower. As we waited for him to return we cleaned up after our dinner (there actually wasn't much to do), then put on our robes and poured ourselves some more sushi.

We chatted as we waited for his return. When he came back he was naked ... but he did have both of his hands covering his maleness. I don't know why he needed to hide himself away for we all see what he looked like!

Yuki stood up, smiled and said in Japanese that she would now show us her *Phallus Anthropologia* presentation that she had prepared for her Anthropology seminar. Yuki was going to give the presentation in a little over a week and said our presentation "*would be a trial run.*"

For almost an hour Yuki explained many traditions from around the world that related to men and their *inkei*. We had a living sculpture there to show us

the ornaments. Many ornaments were meant to hide away his maleness. These ornaments were meant to mark the man as belonging to someone or being married.

Some of the ornaments were meant to hide away the man's scent from the wild animals they hunted and were quite funny, like the Koteka from the deep jungles of Borneo that is a cone put over the *inkei*.

One of the ornaments, from the *Zoe* tribe in South America, did the same thing. It hide away the man's scent, but did it in a very different way than wearing something over the *inkei*. With a band around the torso you tied it up. If only all the men in our tribe walked around like this!



I snuck this picture of him ... so let's hope he doesn't find out!

There was also an ornament called a *kynodesme*. It was from ancient Greek and Roman times when the men tied their foreskin closed with a string. When it came time to demonstrate a *kynodesme* Yuki gave me the string and let me try to tie it. By this time his *inkei* was very slippery with his musk. It took me three tries ... but eventually I succeeded ... what do you think?



He told me it wasn't really painful and that it put his *inkei* asleep. Do you notice that his Kogans are tucked up next to his body ... This was the last ornament in the presentation. We thanked Yuki for her hard work! It was a very interesting experience learning about *Phallus Anthropologia*.

He removed the *kynodesme*. Yes, his *inkei* had grown much smaller. “*Shall we do some art now?*” he asked.

I had already noticed there was a giant bull's head in the corner of the studio.
I pointed at it and said “put it on!”

“You want me to wear the Minotaur's mask do you?”

“Yes ... put it on!” So he did and he saw that I wanted to take some pictures of him wearing it.

He covered himself with his hand as I took the pictures. I asked him whether he would move his hand.



At first he was reluctant ... but I was insistent.

So he growled and changed his pose.



He was still quite small so I understood why he didn't want me to photograph him! I felt guilty. In return for letting me photograph him I asked him to photograph me. He said he would take only one picture of me.

What he suggested was very unique. He asked me to blindfold myself using the blind fold we had used on him. Then take my robe off me. He ran a finger down the side of my body and my body reacted immediately.

He waited perhaps fifteen seconds then took a single picture of me with my cellphone. I took off the blindfold. He handed me back my cellphone. “*This picture is just for you*” he said.



We were standing so close together that if I had leaned just a few centimeters forward his erect, pink *inkei* would have brushed against the *mystery* of me.

We spent the rest of the evening doing art. I did a sculpture while my three sisters did drawings. I will leave that part of the story for another day.

I had a most marvelous nineteenth birthday with my friends.

What is an Oiran by Ayaka

Full Title: 20 Facts You Did Not Know About Oiran

Have heard of the word "*Oiran*" but have no clear idea what it is? Here are 20 facts to enlighten of the unique culture of *Oiran*!



1. *Oiran* (花魁) are the highest ranked sex workers in the Yoshiwara yuukaku (吉原遊廓).

Yoshiwara is an area that is now known to be near Nihonbashi (日本橋). Yuukaku was the government-confirmed block for sex workers. Among all the sex workers there, the *Oiran* was the highest ranked sex worker.

2. The word *oiran* comes from shortening the sentence "Oira no tokoro no nee-san" (おいらの所の姉さん).

There are other theories on the origin of the word *Oiran*, but one theory comes from the sentence above said by the girls working for the *Oiran*. It roughly translates to "the older sisters of our place." Eventually, the word became fixed to refer to the highest ranked sex workers in Yoshiwara *yuukaku*.



3. *Oiran* worked at the Yoshiwara *yuukaku*, but did not sit in a *harimise* (張り見世).

A *harimise* is a type of brothel where the sex workers would line up behind bars, as shown in the image above. Customers would choose which sex worker, or *yuujyo*, (遊女) they want. *Oiran* did not work here. So how do you receive the services of the *Oiran*?

4. To call an Oiran, the customer must use a tea house, *chaya*, (茶屋) as a mediator.

And not just only ask the tea house, they had to spend a lot of money there beforehand. They had to prove that they had enough money and power to play with the *Oiran*. Then, they had the right to call for an *Oiran*.

5. When an *Oiran* was called for service, she would walk with her *kamuro* (肴) and *shinzou* (新造).

This was called an *Oiran douchuu* (花魁道中). *Douchuu* means along the way. *Oiran* would wear a particular outfit and hairstyle (which I will talk about in detail afterwards) with her *kamuro* and *shinzou* (which I will also refer to in detail afterwards) that took care of her.

6. To receive the service of the *Oiran*, the customer had to meet her at least 3 times.

First, the *Oiran* would sit far away from the customer, and did not eat, drink or talk with him. At this time, the *Oiran* would decide the customer was worthy of her service. The customer will call a lot of other *yuujyo* and partied hard to show their wealth.



And that's it. The procedure would be the same as the first time. The Oiran did not eat, drink, or talk with him. The customer would call other yuujoyo, party hard and again display his power and wealth.

8. For the third meeting, the Oiran would do her service.



At the third meeting, the customer would become a najimi (馴染), meaning a familiar customer. The customer would have a tray and pair of chopsticks with his name on them. They had to pay a najimikin (馴染金), or money for *Oiran's* service.



9. The *Oiran* had a higher social rank than the customers.

The *Oiran* chose her customers, not the other way around, which was how it was with normal yuujoyo. At banquets, *Oiran* sat in the kamiza (上座) and the customer sat at the shimoza (下座). In Japan, the person with the higher social

rank sits in the kamiza. However, this distinction only applied inside the Yoshiwara yuukaku.

10. A customer could not contact an *Oiran* directly.

If you wanted to spend some time with the *Oiran*, you had to contact someone in between. This person was called a yarite (遣手). This was applied not only to *Oiran*, but to yuujoyo in general.

11. Kamuro (番) were girls that did every day chores for the *Oiran*.

The girls were around 10 years old. They did everyday chores of the yuujoyo in charge, who would then educate the kamuro about yuujoyo.

12. Shinzou (新造) were girls older than kamuro, and were trainee for yuujoyo.

There are 4 types of shinzou. Bandou shinzou (番頭新造) were girls that were not too attractive to become a yuujoyo, or yuujoyo that are too old for their job. They took care of the *Oiran*. Furisode shinzou (振袖新造) were yuujoyo trainees around the age of 15-16. They did not take customers. Furisode shinzou became oiran in the future. Tomesode shinzou (留袖新造) were the same age of the furisode shinzou, but did not had the future of becoming a high grade yuujoyo. They took customers. Lastly, taiko shinzou (太鼓新造) were yuujoyo that didn't have many customers for sex work, but were very good at entertaining customers with their talents. They showed their talent at banquets.

13. There are 3 steps to becoming an *Oiran*.

They started with being kamuro, then furisode shinzou, and finally an *Oiran*. Not everybody could become an *Oiran*. They had to be physically attractive, tough and smart.

14. Girls and women were scouted from all over Japan to *yuukaku*.



The people who scouted the girls and women in the *yuukaku* were called *zegen* (女衒). The girls and women would receive the money they would earn in the year in advance. Yes, it was called scouting, but it was basically human trafficking.

15. *Yuujiyo* invented their own accent.

Since the Yuujyo came from all around Japan, they invented an accent called kuruwa kotoba (廓詞) to hide their hometown accent. A well-known phrase would be arinsu (ありんす) which was said at the end of the sentence.

16. To become an *Oiran*, you had to be cultured.

Girls that would become *Oiran* would be educated from when they were kamuro. The lessons consisted of classic Japanese, calligraphy, tea ceremonies, tanka poetry, igo (traditional Japanese board game) koto and shamisen (traditional Japanese instruments).

17. To become an *Oiran* required a lot of money and time.

Investing a girl to become an *Oiran* required a lot of money. Even when a woman became an *Oiran*, she had to pay her kamuro, shinzou, her own place and to maintain her looks. Being and playing with an *Oiran* was not for the peasants.

18. The hairstyle of the *Oiran* is called the datehyougo (伊達兵庫).

They would insert 3 pieces of kanzashi on each side of their head, 6 in total, 2 pieces of kanzashi made out of coral, and 3 pieces of kanzashi made out of tortoise shells. The hair would be woven into two top knots on the side of the head.

19. *Oiran* wore black geta that were heavy high heels.

They would wear these geta, which were called a sanmaiba geta (三枚歯下駄), during the Oiran douchuu. With these geta, they would walk in the Hachimonji style (八文字). Hachimonji was a way of walking where you put the foot inside when you make a step.

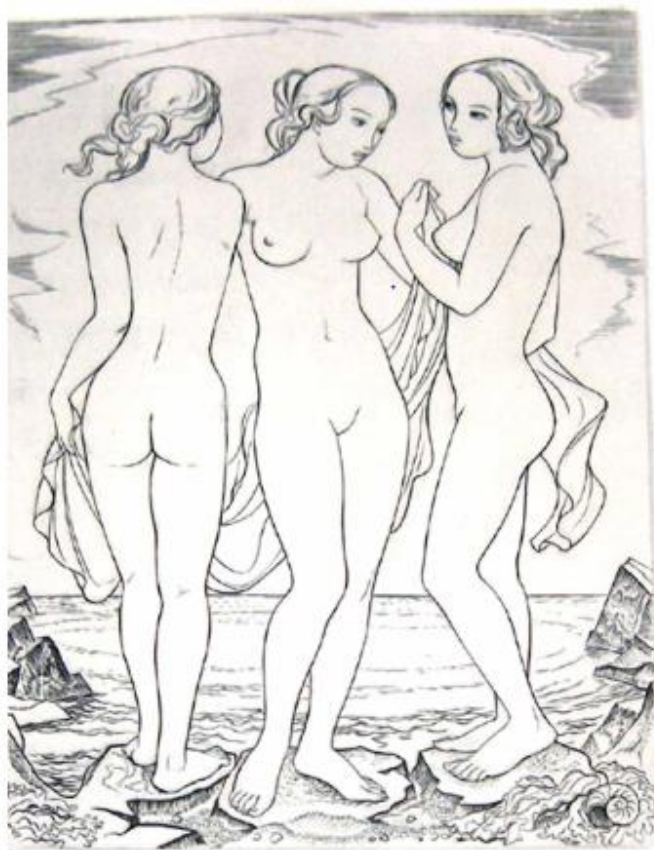


20. An Oiran is not a Geisha.

Many people confuse *Oiran* with Geisha, or the other way round, but they are totally different things. Being a geisha is a job where they entertain guests at banquets with traditional Japanese singing, koto or shamisen performances, and so on.

An *Oiran* is a high ranked sex worker in the Edo period.

A fine collection of Art Books



Atelier Press

A growing collection of titles

Editor in Chief: Patrick Bruskiewich

Benno, The Wild Man From Borneo by Henry Miller

Benno has always reminded me of a Sandwich Islander. Not only that his hair is by turns straight and kinky, not only that he rolls his eyes in delirious wrath, not only that he is gaunt and cannibalistic, positively ferocious when his breadbasket is empty, but that he is also gentle and peaceful as a dove, calm, placid, cool as a volcanic lake. He says he was born in the heart of London, of Russian parents, but that is a myth he has invented to conceal his truly fabulous origin. Anyone who has ever skirted an archipelago knows the uncanny faculty which the islands have of appearing and disappearing. Unlike the mirages of the desert these mysterious islands do truly disappear from sight, do truly bob up from the unknown depths of the sea. Benno is very much like that. He inhabits an archipelago of his own in which there are these mysterious apparitions and disappearitions. Nobody has ever explored Benno with any thoroughness. He is elusive, slippery, treacherous, volatile, uncanny. Sometimes he is a mountain peak covered with bright snow, sometimes a broad glacial lake, sometimes a volcano spouting fire and brimstone. Sometimes he rolls quietly down to the ocean front and lies there like a big white Easter egg waiting to be dipped and packed away in a softly padded basket. And sometimes he gives the impression of one who was not born of a mother's womb, but of a monster who picked his way out of a hard-boiled egg. If you examine him closely you will see that he has rudimentary claws like the mock turtle, that he has spurs like the clover cock, and if you examine very closely you will discover that, like the dodo bird, he carries a harmonica in his right tubercle.

At an early age, a very early age, he found himself living the lonely, desperate life of a river pirate on a little island off Hell Gate. Near by was an ancient whirlpool, such as Homer speaks of in the Carthaginian version of the *Odyssey*. Here he perfected himself in that culinary art which was to stand him in good stead during his uninterrupted privations. Here he acquired a knowledge of Chinese, Turkestani, Kurd and the less well-known dialects of Upper Rhodesia. Here also he learned to write in that hand which only the prophets of the desert have mastered, an illegible hand which is nevertheless intelligible to students of esoteric lore. Here too he gleaned an inkling of those strange Runic patterns which he was later to employ in his pink and orange gouaches, his linoleum fretworks, his arboreal hallucinations. Here he studied the seed and the ovum, the unicellular life of the animalculae which daily filled his lobster-pots. Here the mystery of *the egg* first engrossed him—not only its shape and balance, but its logic, its ordained irreversibility. Over and over again the egg crops up, sometimes in a china blue dream, sometimes counterpointed against the tripod, sometimes chipped and nascent. Exhausted by ceaseless exploration and investigation Benno is forever returning to the source and fundament, the center of his own vital creation: the egg. Always it is an Easter egg, which is to say a holy egg. Always the lost racial egg, seed of pride and strength, which has perdured since the destruction of the holy temple. When there is nothing left but despair Benno curls up inside his holy egg and goes to sleep. He sleeps the long schizophrenic sleep of the winter season. It is more congenial than running about looking for sirloin steaks and chopped onions. When he gets unbearably hungry he will eat his egg, and then for a time he sleeps anywhere, often right outside the Closerie des Lilas, beside the statue erected in memory of Marshal Ney. These are the Waterloo

sleeps, so to speak, when all is rain and mud—and Blücher never appears. When the sun comes out Benno appears again—alive, chipper, perky, sardonic, irritable, buzzing, questioning, dubious, querulous, suspicious, effervescent, always in blue overalls and sleeves rolled up, always a quid of tobacco in the corner of his mouth. By sundown he has made a dozen new canvases, large and small. Whereupon it is a question of space, of frames, of nails and thumb-tacks. The cobwebs are shaken down, the floor washed, the ladder removed. The bed is left stranded in the middle air, the lice make merry, the cowbells ring. Nothing to do but to stroll out to Parc Montsouris. Here, denuded of flesh and raiment, deserted by human kind, Benno studies the tomtit and the amarillo, makes note of the weather-cocks, tests the sand and gravel which his kidneys are constantly throwing out.

With Benno it is always a feast or a famine. Either he is loading crushed rock on the Hudson or he is painting the side of a house. He is a dynamo, a gravel-crusher, a lawn-mower, an eight-day clock all in one. Now and then he lies up for repairs; the barnacles are scraped off and all seams dried and caulked. Sometimes a new poop-deck is installed. You look at his progeny and it is Easter Island by the Count Potocki de Montalk: new landmarks, new monuments, new relics, all slithering in a Camembert green light which comes up out of the bulrushes. There he is, Benno, sitting in the midst of his archipelago, and the eggs running about like mad. Only new eggs this time, with new equilibrium, all frolicking on the greensward. Benno, fat and lazy, lolls in the sun with the gravy running down his chops. He reads last year's newspapers to while away the time. He invents new dishes made of seaweed and scallops, or failing scallops, mountain oysters. All with a dash of

Worcestershire sauce and fried parsley. At such moments he loves everything that is succulent and bunting with juice. He tears the bones apart and growls like a contented wolf. He ruts.

As I say, all to conceal his fabulous origin. To conceal his monstrous birth Benno goes about smooth of tongue, sleek as a puma after the rains, talking now of this thing, now of that. Inside him there is an unholy abracadabra fermenting. Strange equations form, queer plant-like growths, fungus, toadstools, marshmallow, poison ivy, the mandrake, the eucalyptus, all forming inside him in the hollow of the entrails in a sort of wild linoleum pattern which the burin will trace when he comes out of his trance. There are at least nine different cities buried beneath his midriff; the middle one is Samarkand where he had a rendezvous once with death. Here he passed through a glazing process which left the middle layers smooth and minor-like. Here, when he is in utter desperation, he strolls among the stalagmites and stalactites, cool as a knife and garnished with mulberry leaves. Here he sees himself ever young, the Swiss Family Robinson kill-joy, the Gloomy Gus who played by Hell Gate's shores. Here the nostalgic odors are revived, the smell of the mud-crab and the sea turtle, all the tender little delicacies of the old island life when his palate was being formed.

Like the bed louse and the amaranthus Benno makes progress in all directions at once. At twelve he was a virtuoso; at sixty he will be fresh and dandy, a bright young bantam with a red comb and featherweight gloves, to say nothing of the spurs. Circular progress, but no speed and no errors. Between enthusiasms he dips like the leviathan to snooze on the ocean floor; or, like

the sea-cow, he will come up to graze along the Labrador Coast. Now and then he flies from wall to wall—with the close-clipped wings which he invents during hibernation. Occasionally he grows a coat of fast Merino wool fresh from the Oberammergau region. In his right moments he trusts nobody. He was born with the evil eye, the acetylene torch planted in the middle of his forehead. When he is restive he champs and paws at the bit; when he is full of oats he kicks up his heels; when he is angry he snorts fire. Usually he is gentle and placid, still as the Hibernian in his fen. He loves the green meadows and the high hills, the kites soaring over Soo-chow, the gibbet and the rack; he loves the leather-heeled coolies, the oyster pirates, the wardens of Dannemora and the patient carpenter with his adze and footrule. Trigonometry he loves also and the intricate flights of the homing pigeon, or the fortifications of the Dardanelles. He loves everything that is complicated by rule and logarithm or spiced with fiery tinctures: he loves the styptic poisons, the triple bromides, the touch of carborundum, the glaze of mercurochrome. He loves light and space as well as champagne and oysters. But best of all he loves a rumpus, because then the wild man of Borneo comes out and the sky is full of prickly heat. In anger he will bite his own tail or bray like the donkey. In anger he is apt to cut off his own fetlocks. His anger comes up out of the groin, like jets of prussic acid. It puts a clean coat of varnish over his work, his loves, his friendships. It is the heraldic emblem, the tarantula which you will find embroidered on all his nightshirts, on his socks and even his cuff-buttons. Bright, feathery anger which he wears like a plume. It becomes him like an emolument, or an emulsion.

Such is Benno, as I have always known him and found him to be. A sturdy cutlass with a Penobscot mien and the swagger-gait of a caballero. He will go far, unless he is cut down by the sword. He belongs to the inky peninsulas, the open waterways, the Culebra Cuts. Like the squid he has no known origin, stemming rather from pride and arrogance, from aqueous depths and clabby footholds. He marks off his own precincts and defends his terrain like a saber-toothed tiger. He adopts the protective coloration of the zebra and if necessary can lie in the tall grass for aeons of time. Basically he is volcanic ash, immiscible in water, incorruptible and slow to rust. He is of the old line of Pelagians, the ridge-runners who traveled over the sunken Andes to found a Mexican world. He is tough as an old turkey, but warm-hearted and inhumanly tender. A sort of wild man from Borneo with central heating, spring mattress, castors and a boomerang in his left hand.

***Tampopo* Film Review by Roger Ebert**

*Tampopo** is one of those utterly original movies that seems to exist in no known category. Like the French comedies of Jacques Tati, it's a bemused meditation on human nature in which one humorous situation flows into another offhandedly, as if life were a series of smiles.

As it opens, the film looks like some sort of Japanese satire of Clint Eastwood's spaghetti Westerns. The hero is Goro (Tsutomu Yamazaki) a lone rider with a quizzical smile, who rides a semi instead of a horse. Along with some friends, he stages a search for the perfect noodle restaurant but cannot find it. Then he meets Tampopo (Nobuko Miyamoto), a sweet young woman who has her heart in the right place, but not her noodles.



Tampopo (Nobuko Miyamoto) and Goro (Tsutomu Yamazaki)

The movie then turns into the fairly freestyle story of the efforts by *Tampopo* and her protector to research the perfect noodle and open the perfect noodle restaurant. Like most movies about single-minded obsessions, this one quickly becomes very funny. It might seem that American audiences would know little and care less about the search for the perfect Japanese noodle, but because the movie is so consumed and detailed, so completely submerged in noodleology, it takes on a kind of weird logic of its own.

Consider, for example, the tour de force of a scene near the beginning of the movie, where a noodle master explains the correct ritual for eating a bowl of noodle soup. He explains every ingredient. How to cut it, how to cook it, how to address it, how to think of it, how to regard it, how to approach it, how to smell it, how to eat it, how to thank it, how to remember it. It's a kind of gastronomic religion, and director Juzo Itami creates a scene that makes noodles in this movie more interesting than sex and violence in many another.

The movie is constructed as a series of episodes along the route to the perfect noodle restaurant. Some of the scenes hardly even seem to apply, but are hilarious anyway - the treatment, for example, of a man who dies in the pursuit of the perfect bowl of noodles.

Tampopo doesn't limit itself to satirizing one genre of Hollywood film, either. Although the central image is of an Eastwood-style hero on an ultimate quest, there are all sorts of other sly little satirical asides, including one so perfectly aimed that even to describe it would take away some of the fun.

Humor, it is said, is universal. Most times it is not. The humor that travels best, I sometimes think, is not "universal" humor at all, but humor that grows so specifically out of one culture that it reaches other cultures almost by seeming to ignore them. The best British comedies were the very specifically British films, such as "The Lavender Hill Mob" and "School for Scoundrels." The best Italian comedies were such local products as "Seduced and Abandoned." The funniest French films were by Tati, who seemed totally absorbed in himself.



And this very, very Japanese movie, which seems to make no effort to communicate to other cultures, is universally funny almost for that reason. Who cannot identify with the search for the perfect noodle? Certainly any American can, in the land of sweet corn festivals, bakeoffs and contests for the world's best chili. This is a very funny movie.

* *Tampopo* is Japanese for Dandelion

{review first published in 1987 on the release of *Tampopo* in North America}

Some Film Review for Tampopo

“No foodie film is as deliriously, obscenely pleasurable...[It has] a king of food reverence that borders on porn.”

David Edelstein, **New York Magazine**

“A joyous wallow in the art of living to eat...The movie, a sublime sukiyaki of cooking tips and parodies, is obscenely pleasurable, and pleasure is its cheerful obsession. Tampopo finds in food a source of magical communion; like sex and oysters, this movie is best savoured amongst friends... Itami is the happiest, least fussy of cooks. Surveying a collection of hoboes as they rhapsodise about a 1980 Bordeaux, the hero sighs, ‘They live deeply, these vagabonds.’ Tampopo is about living deeply, sloppily, with feeling.”

David Edelstein, **Village Voice**

“An uproarious, tasty series of satirical sketches that celebrate an erotic connection between food and sex.”

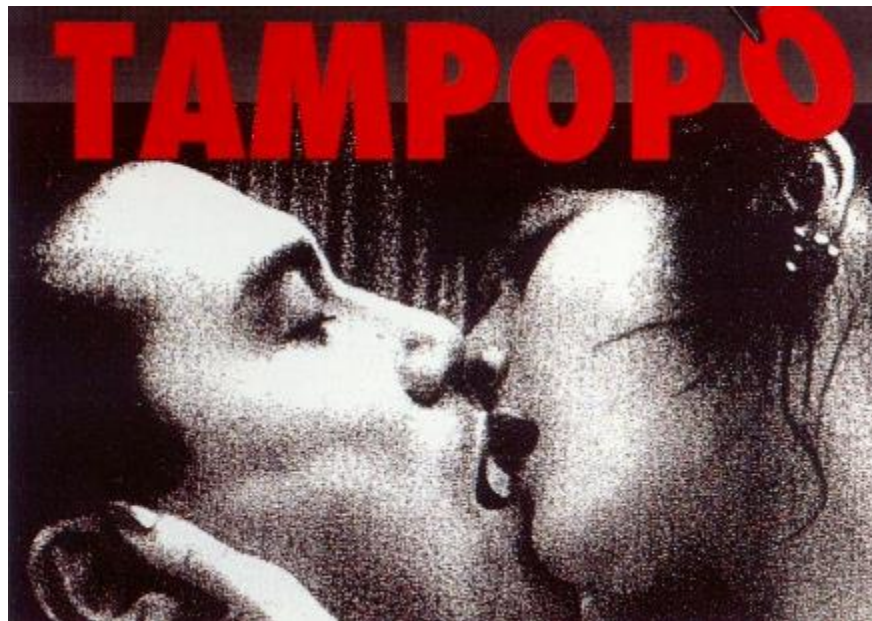
Stephen Holden, **The New York Times**

“A Delectable Comedy! Tampopo’s humor can be gut-busting, but food is never the butt of the joke. It triggers behavior and serves as an expression of individual philosophy....Everyone needs nourishment, and Itami found humor and poignancy in how it’s provided and received. His wife [Nobuko]

Miyamoto was the Giulietta Masina to his Federico Fellini, the heart in Itami's absurdist humor. Her meek Tampopo isn't thought to have the ability or stamina to make first-class ramen, but Miyamoto's subtle portrayal of her growing confidence is a joy to behold. Food isn't just consumed in Tampopo — every bite is an ode to life."

Serena Donadoni, **The Village Voice**





East to West by Yasuo Kuniyoshi

[**New York**] In 1925 and again in 1928 after my pictures had begun to sell we went abroad. There I admired and studied the old masters and traveled widely to see them. I was impressed by French contemporaries, especially for their keen understanding of their medium. I was excited about the things I saw, but in spite of persuasion on the part of Pascin and several other friends to stay longer in France, I was terribly glad to get back to New York. I found much to admire in French painters. There are so many little artists here, so few real painters. There they had so many fine painters.

The trip proved a great stimulus, enlarging my scope and vision. Almost everybody on the other side was painting directly from the object, something I hadn't done all these years. It was rather difficult to change my approach since up to then I had painted almost entirely from imagination and my memories of the past.

Throughout these many years of painting I have practiced starting my work from reality stating the facts before me. Then I paint without the object for a certain length of time, combining reality and imagination.

I have often obtained in painting directly from the object that which appears to be real results at the very first shot, but when that does happen, I purposely destroy what I have accomplished and re-do it over and over again. In other words that which comes easily I distrust. When I have condensed and simplified sufficiently I know then that I have something more than reality.

A word I often use is "felt," the meaning of which I try to get across in my painting. To me it means the realization of facts. For instance when painting a floor I want that floor to be a floor. Whatever object I am painting I try to realize its relation point by point; the relation of myself to the object, and in the same way, point by point, the relation of the object to the background so as to make this object exist in space.

Comments upon the object or the fact of the object are not sufficient elements for a full expression. Each artist has to face the forces of nature and mould them together with his experience in order to create drama. Drama takes on different expressions according to the time and place.

I spend a long time drawing from the object although I never make a composition in smaller scale no matter how large a canvas I am working on. I start drawing right on the canvas, working very carefully at the beginning for the painting, and develop the drawing until it fully suggests the subject. This enables me to carry on with the painting without the object in front of me.

As time goes on colors take on a new significance. I don't use as many colors as I used to, but try more precisely to paint, in relation to color, so as to produce more color without using many colors. For luminosity I build a darker color on top of a lighter color. I believe in glazing to achieve depth and transparency of color.

I like to start as many canvases as I can during the summer. I carry them to a certain point so that when I start working on them again, usually back in New York in the winter, it means about six months have elapsed since I originally started the canvas. Therefore I sometimes have about a dozen canvases going at the same time. I never paint over, even a small area, if there are changes to be made. Instead I always scrape down to the canvas and rebuild again.

There are numerous problems that beset the artist in his work. Consciously or unconsciously each artist tries to solve them. Lately I have come to the stage where I actually take a problem and try to solve it. For instance I was interested in painting a dark object within the dark. In order to carry this out successfully it may take me several years. Once accomplished to my satisfaction, however, it becomes an integral part of me, enabling me to go on to another problem.

Seven ... Going on Eight by Patrick Bruskiewich

Recently I had a friend stay with me. She arrived from overseas when she was seven months pregnant and left when she was ending her eighth. It was an interesting experience for me for many reasons. And no ... I am not the father. She is from China and the father is back in China somewhere, continuing to live his '*Life of Reilly*.' He doesn't care. My friend is separated from her Canadian husband, and has a five year old son that stays with the father. She is pretty much all by herself and turned to me for help. She wanted her baby born here in Canada, instead of back in China. She asked whether she could stay with me for two weeks but ended up staying for two months.

Yes, the story is a bit complicated. My landlord warned me against letting her stay and even talked about eviction. But honestly, in the middle of winter, in the middle of Covid?

The last time I had been so close to a woman expecting a child was when I was six, and my mother was expecting my youngest sister. That was over a half century ago. I am a Catholic boy and when I was six I wondered and was told ... '*babies are delivered by Storks*.' I am a bit older now, but it still is some of a mystery how babies come about. Having been married for a dozen years and now divorced for twice as long, I still have not had the pleasure of holding a child of my loins in my arms, and probably never will, given my advancing age. I am very Catholic, in the sense I know the difference between love and lust. If you read my poetry and prose you will find I am a bit of a

romantic at heart. But my heart pines for a time long gone ... both in my life and in the age that we all live in. I can only dream of a family.

My friend's visit was a marvelous time in some ways, and rather trying in other ways. It started in December 2020 and ended just a few days ago. I love her as a friend but she has amorous eyes for someone else. During her eight weeks with me she viewed my humble apartment as nothing more than a way-station ... her hotel ... as she admitted seduced another man for a chance to live with him. I knew what she was doing because we talked about her courtesan life style and the fact that she is not gainfully employed.

Her narcissism could not find any fault in her lifestyle. Am I so naïve? Yet, she also could not understand why her old flame here in Vancouver was so lukewarm to her ... and so I had to explain to her how men feel towards women who carry another man's baby.

Yes ... I am truly Catholic. I asked her if she wanted me to hold her hand when her little Mei Mei was born (she knew it would be a girl ... as I did when I first set eyes on her when she arrived to stay with me). She pushed that offer away. I felt betrayed. I knew she was alone and had to live off her wits. But I also knew that if she stumbled and fell it would be her baby daughter who would suffer and not her.

Yet, you need to know she comes from a wealthy family whose patience has all been used up. Her sister contacted me and I told her what was going on. I

suggested the two sisters talk, but I will never know if they have. They don't really get along as two sisters should.

And now I understand why. The patience that was once so plentiful in my heart for my friend has been poured out like a fine wine spilled into the dust at my feet. In the end I had to ask her to leave and in doing so pushed her into the arms of her love interest. At least she has a warm place to stay!

This courtesan likes her beauty products and perfumes and I have chronic asthma. I asked her to choose between my health and her vanity. Well ... Courtesans are by their very nature narcissists *n'est ce pas?* Vanity it was ...

I write this short piece of prose on the day her baby is due. I can only hope that Mei Mei is doing well. I know my friend will always land on her feet, like a purring feline ... on her seventh life perhaps. She has told me she will suckle her little one only six months, and then get back to 'her work.' What then is the work of a courtesan in her thirties with two children born of her womb and breasts that have started to fall to gravity? We are not young forever ...

When she arrived I lent her a book about courtesans written in the 1980's by a British women author. I suggested she read the book. She asked, instead, that I recount what the book represented. So I did. I explained that courtesans come in two types – those that exist for themselves and those that exist for others. She did not accept the nuance though, that the courtesans who lived only for themselves died impoverished and forgotten, while the courtesans

that lived for others would become acknowledged partners in the society they helped to create.

My friend and I first met six years ago when we happen upon common interests in architecture and art. For added measure, I started a painting, in an art deco style of a *Minatrice*, and finished the painting the day I had to ask her to leave. If you do not know, a *Minatrice* is the female version of a Minotaur – a beast that has a ghastly appetite and in the end consumes its quarry. Perhaps I am just quarry?

The day I had to ask her to leave I could not breathe. I was suffering anaphylaxis. She is now gone and the air is cleared, figuratively and literally. It has taken me many harsh days for my lungs to fight off inflammation. My old and broken heart beats with an arrhythmia. It was either her vanity, or my life. It was seven going on eight.

With nowhere else to stay except a woman's shelter her gallant friend came to her rescue. I made sure that the parties that be, including her obstetrician, understand how things had gotten to this point. I suggested that the beauty products and perfumes be put away until Mei Mei has been suckled. I can only pray that everyone one will do their duty to God and little Mei Mei.

But she is a *Minatrice*. I give her eight months and then I expect a knock at my door. An old cat has only nine lives. What then shall I do?

Kitan Poetry

Three Poems by Queena Li

Thought after waking up

you were sleeping
but the world was awake
The world is awake day and night
never feel tired

you ask what did you miss
The world let the question pass by
as the water of time runs fast
left everyone wet

when wrinkles climb up the corner of your eyes
when your vision as cloudy as your mind
you may regret sleeping every night
or
you may blame the world
why does it leave you behind

Ask the right questions

She said always ask the right question
as all other people told me

whether that is the key to solving every problem?

when I am sick, I should ask when can I recover or
when I shall die?

when I face a problem, I should ask how can I solve it or
what will be the worst result?

when I don't have a lover, I should ask when i will get married or
how shall i enjoy my freedom?

when I'm in love, i should ask whether he loves me or
do i love myself?

when you're reading my thought, who you were thinking of and
what question do you want to ask?

No poem on Tuesday

No poem on Tuesday, as my boss fired me on Monday
No poem on Tuesday, as Saturday is far away

As my chequing account balance is low
as no beer in my fridge
as no girl matches me on tinder

as the beautiful shy hints to rain
as i want to say something stupid, but I can't afford Alcohol or something
more

No poem on Tuesday

Just crows' complain day and night

No poem on Tuesday

my eyes are tired, even can't build my wonderland in minecraft

kawaii can not hind my sadness
beard can not
kimchi stain on my shirt can not
mask can not
you turn over this page also can not

No poem on Tuesday

Pictorial: Two Hands in the Sky by Queena



What Loneliness Is by Patrick Bruskiewich

Loneliness is walking in the
Shadows of the Cherry
Blossoms and having no one to
Share the moment with.

Loneliness is seeing how pink
And beautiful they are
And being reminded of the
Wonders of the woman you love.

Loneliness is watching the
Cherry Blossoms dance
Through space and time reminding
You each moment is fleeting.

Loneliness is walking alone
Along the boulevards of life and
Realizing no one presses close to
your arm to ask ... Do you love me?

Something Very Weird!



Kitan Art

I Do Want to be Noticed by Yuki

[**Osaka**] Recently I broke up with my boyfriend who had cheated on me. To cheer myself up I took my Canon camera and did some nudes of myself.

First I went back to the *Onsen* where I broke up with him and took this picture.



This was the first time I had shaved myself ...time for something new!



Can you see the anger in my eyes?

It took me many weeks to calm myself down. Because of my anger one thing I noticed about myself was that I was becoming less modest and much more daring Can you can see this in my self-portraits.

A few weeks later after visiting the Onsen I asked a photographer friend to lend me his studio for an afternoon ... and leave me alone to do my own thing. I played with the lighting and did black and white photograph ...



It took me a few tries before I got everything properly aligned. It is hard to do photography all by yourself. I chose a twenty second delay ...

Do you like my sneer? If you want to know what I am saying ... read my lips ... *“see what you are missing!”*

I experimented a bit more with the lighting and tried a few color pictures.



I found doing color photographs more challenging than black and white. I had trouble controlling the glare off my shoulders and breasts.

To accentuate my nipples I had to put some lip gloss on them.

For some strange reason the picture of me with my boots on made more aesthetic sense than with bare feet. Can you explain that one to me?

When my photographer friend returned, to thank him I let him take just one photograph of me.

This is the photograph we did together.



I knew my friend was going to want to take photographs of me so I brought along my own props – some glass beads I had seen in a shop around the corner from my apartment. I set the beads ... see how I have covered myself.

Do you notice my eyes ... *it tired me out having him in the studio with me.*

I let him take this one photograph then told him I had a date ... got dressed and dashed away. Why can't men just be friends ... like women can be?

I had been away for two years studying in Vancouver and when I got back home I moved out of my parent's apartment. I have my own place now.

My apartment is very simple, but it is my own place. I don't plan to live here more than a few months then I am off to Oxford in England to do my masters.



Of all the self-portraits I have taken this is one of my favorites.

It was a Sunday morning and I had just woken up. You can see I am happy.

I had gone out for dinner the evening before with some high school friends and we had laughed the night away.

You can see in my eyes something I now felt ... a sense of self, a sense of self-reliance and a sense of purpose.



I had felt very hurt when my boyfriend betrayed me. But then I began to wonder ... why should I define myself through the eyes of others?

Why do I even need to rely on others ... except perhaps my parents and immediate family? It is time for me to grow up and be my own person.

To get the next picture I hung the camera on a ceiling light above my bed.

This pictures took many tries! It was difficult to keep the camera from swinging. I wasn't going to give up though. I wanted to see my curves ...

I finally decided to use a very long delay ... boy did my stomach grumble!



by the time I got this picture I was famished. It was noon and I hadn't had breakfast yet. Can you see! I take very good care of myself. No fat on me!

Then I threw on a few things and dashed out for lunch. I wasn't wearing panties under my dress. I have started to be daring in this way. If my mother knew she would have a fit!

This is the new me!

The old me didn't want to be noticed. She wanted to blend in and be invisible.

The new me. ... I do want to be noticed.



I am not ready to throw in the towel ... but to have as much fun as I can!

Yes, I want to be told how beautiful I am!

Drawings of the Male Form by Umi







Kitan Photography

Some Male Figuratives at Wreck Beach by Keiko







Kitty Cosplay Costumes by Umi

[**Tokyo**] Meow ... My name is Umi. I am just turning twenty.

For the past four years I have been a cosplay gravure model. I let photographers take pictures of me but it is always when I am wearing clothes or costumes. Only my mother and my doctor have seen me not wearing anything (oh ... I am shy even my doctor is a woman).

The first time I let a photographer take a picture of me in costume was when I was sixteen and was walking through an outdoor summer cosplay convention in Tokyo. I was there with my high school girl friends and we were all dressed up in our favorite costumes. I was wearing a costume that I had put together at the last minute. It was a Kitty Cat costume with ears that I made. It was not a very good costume so I was surprised when a photographer at the convention wanted to take my picture. I let him but only as I stood behind my friends who had much better costumes. He gave me his card afterwards but I threw it away. I did not want to be tempted. One of my friends told me the photographer had a reputation.

I like wearing Kitty Cat costumes. In Japan there is a type of cosplay all about Kitty Cats. Some of these costumes are made of black leather. These are for women who prowl the nights looking for trouble. I dress as a day and indoor Cat trying to stay out of trouble. Meow













I dyed my hair for this photoshoot. Do you like the colors? Is it purrfect?

Mei Shi ... a self portrait

[Shanghai] I play the violin. I am still learning so I am not that good. But I am not allowed to practice in my apartment. My neighbors complain. They complain about everything! So I play outdoors. When I play in my apartment I don't wear clothes ... so why should I wear anything when I play outdoors?



The Feminine Form by Ayaka

[**Kyoto**] Recently an artist friend asked me to pose for some art. I thought he was going to sketch or paint me. Instead he said he wanted to sculpt me. I was thrilled to sit for him but asked he not do a bust that included my face.



He asked if he could take a reference picture to help him with his sculpture. I agreed to let him take this photograph of me. I was stretching my arms upwards. I am amazed on how my torso looks. He is still at work on the art.

The Swan by

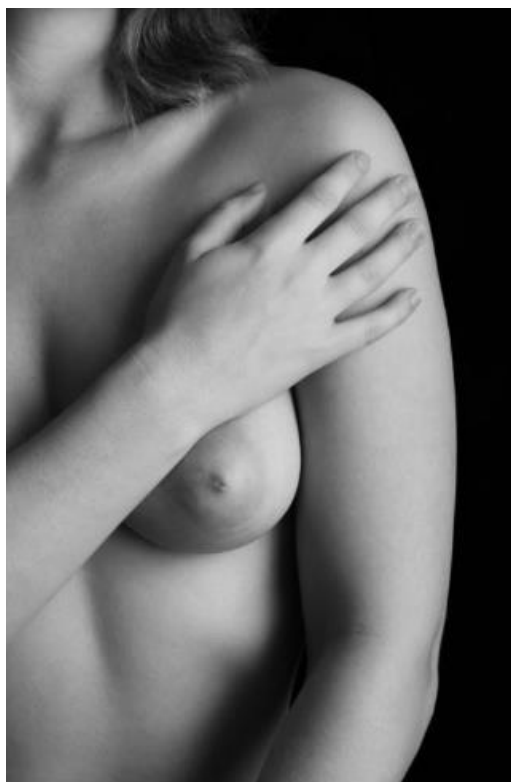
[**Dahlian**] I have a photographer friend. He wants to become famous. I have known him for all my life. We grew up and went to elementary school together. We had not seen each other for six years while he went to University. Last summer he visited his family and we happen to meet at a store. I had grown tall in six years. He said he wanted to take my picture.

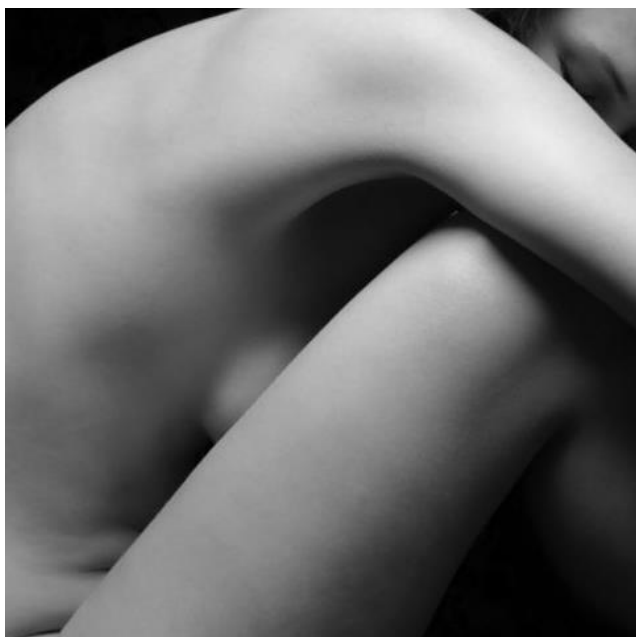
He wanted me nude. I said that it must be special. He chose an interesting place and theme. I tied the belt to hide my sex. It is a beautiful picture!



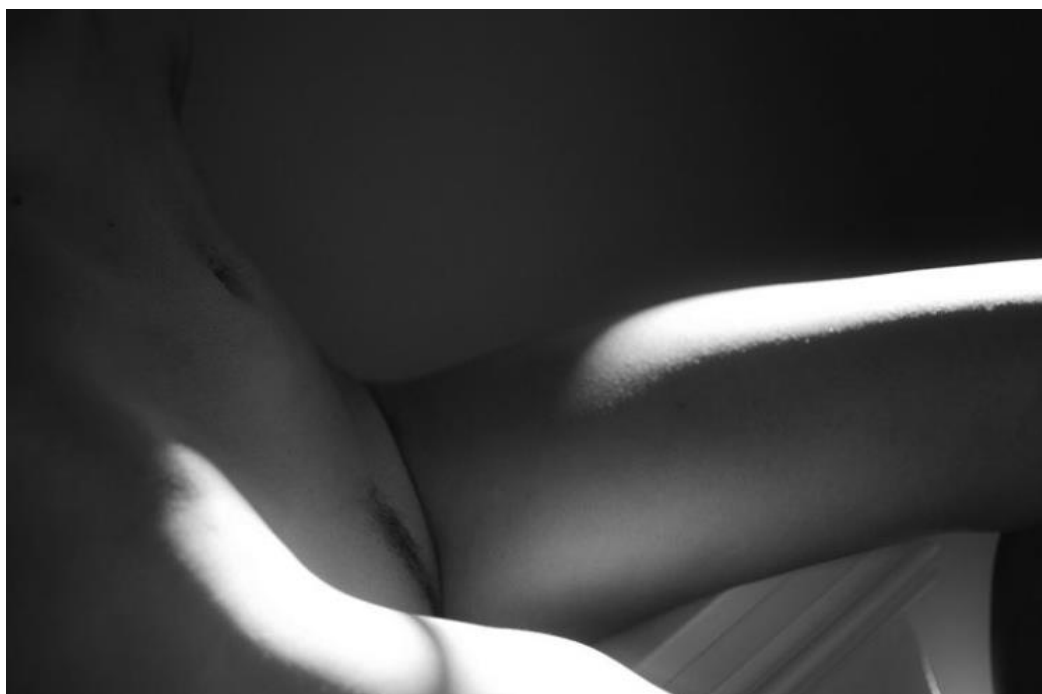
Some feminine forms by Rin













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